

Remarks

Claims 1-13 and 15-20 are pending in the present application and all stand rejected. By this amendment, claims 1, 3, 6, 9-12, 15, 17-18, and 20 have been amended, some being amended to cure various noted objections and §112, 2nd paragraph rejections, as well as place some of the claims in closer conformity with U.S. claiming practice. Support for substantive amendments in claims 1 and 20 may be found, for example, on pages 12-14 and in FIGs. 4-6 of the present application. Claim 14 has been canceled and the elements thereof incorporated into newly independent claim 15, which also has incorporated the claimed elements of previously presented independent claim 1. The specification has also been amended to cure various typographical errors.

Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the present objections and rejections based on the following remarks.

Claim Objections

Claims 3-18 were objected to based on improper multiple dependent claims. It is noted that former claim 6, which depended from either claim 1 or claim 2, was a proper multiple dependent claim according to U.S. practice. Concerning claims 3, 9, 11, 12, 17, and 18, the dependencies of these claims have been amended in order to obviate the objections.

§ 112 Rejections

Claim 20 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. In particular, the term “the front end” in line 2 was asserted as lacking sufficient antecedent basis in the claim. The amendment to claim 20 is believed to address and resolve this rejection, and Applicants request that this rejection be withdrawn accordingly.

§ 102 Rejections

Claims 1, 2, 6-8, 19, and 20 were rejected under 35 USC § 102(b) as being anticipated by McRitchie (U.S. Patent No. 3,236,459). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection for at least the following reasons.

Concerning amended independent claims 1 and 20, Applicants assert that McRitchie does not teach or suggest all of the elements of these claims. In particular amended claim 1 features “a spray head including a hollow body configured to releasably couple to a rear end to the spray gun body, and an insert having an axial bore and configured to axially insert into the hollow body, wherein the combination of the hollow body and the insert define a spray nozzle at a front end of the spray head.” Similarly, amended claim 20 features “a hollow body and an insert configured to couple axially within the hollow body, the insert having a bore extending from a rear end of the insert to an outlet at a front end of the insert, the rear end of the hollow body having a formation to connect releasably the spray head to the spray gun, and the hollow body and the insert being connectable to a reservoir to supply liquid to the spray head.” McRitchie, on the other hand, teaches an integral assembly having a singular body 212, not a spray head having a hollow body that releasably couples to a rear end of the spray gun body, and an insert with an axial bore that is axially inserted in the hollow body. Accordingly, neither McRitchie or the other prior art of record teach or suggest all of the claimed features of claims 1 and 20.

With regard to claims 2, 6-8, and 19, these claims are believed to be allowable on their merits, and also due to their ultimate dependency on independent claim 1 discussed above. Additionally, with respect to dependent claims 7-13, 17, and 18, these claims are also believed to be allowable due at least on their dependency, as well as on their merits.

§ 103 Rejections

Claims 3-5 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over McRitchie in view of Holt (U.S. Patent No. 5,501,397). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection and submit that these claims are allowable at least due to their dependency stemming from claim 1, which is believed to be allowable as discussed above, as well as on their merits.

It is noted in connection with newly amended claim 15, which is now independent, that McRitchie does not teach or suggest the elements of this claim. Specifically, claim 15 features, among other things, “horns [that] are detachable for adapting the spray nozzle for dispensing different liquids.” The cited reference clearly teaches an orifice member 270 having horns 324, which although the orifice member 270 is removable from body 212, the horns 324 themselves

are not detachable from the orifice member 270, but are integral with member 270. Additionally, the orifice member 270 also defines the annular discharge orifice 296 (i.e., the spray nozzle), so it would not be obvious to remove the horns from member 270 given the particular disclosed structure of McRitchie that also teaches member 270 as defining the spray nozzle. Accordingly, McRitchie does not teach or suggest the features of independent claim 15.

Conclusion

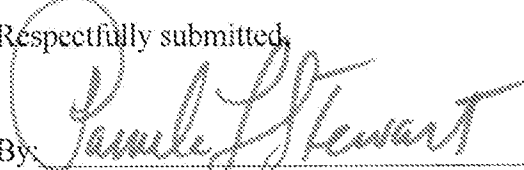
In view of the above, it is submitted that the application is in condition for allowance and issuance of a Notice of Allowance is respectfully requested. Please contact the undersigned should there be any questions or in order to expedite prosecution.

Respectfully submitted,

March 28, 2007

Date

By:


Pamela L. Stewart, Reg. No.: 45,707
Telephone No.: 651-733-2059

Office of Intellectual Property Counsel
3M Innovative Properties Company
Facsimile No.: 651-736-3833